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May 3, 2002

UNDER SECRETARY FOR HEALTH'S INFORMATION LETTER

**JIMMY LEE AWARD PROGRAM FOR INNOVATION
IN HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT**

1. The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Human Resources Management (HRM) Innovation Awards Program was developed to honor those innovative programs and practices that support the goals of the organization and reflect the standards, values and heart-felt dedication provided by the late Jimmy Lee.
2. A United States Army veteran, Jimmy Lee served tours of duty in both Korea and Vietnam and was awarded a Purple Heart. He joined the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in 1972 and served as a Personnel Management Specialist at the VA Medical Centers in Washington, DC, Houston, TX, and Miami, FL. Mr. Lee also served as the Personnel Officer at the VA Medical Centers in Richmond, VA, and Portland, OR, before establishing the VHA HRM Office in November 1999 and becoming its first Director.
3. Mr. Lee was an innovative and imaginative manager with a passion for providing top-flight customer service. His commitment to assisting VHA managers and employees is embodied in his frequently quoted comment, "We don't have problems, only solutions," which has become the operating principle and motto of the VHA HRM Group. This can-do attitude is Mr. Lee's legacy to the Department's HRM community.
4. Recipients of the last HRM Innovations awards were:
 - a. **Award Recipient:** TRADITIONS, VA Medical Center, Huntington, WV. TRADITIONS is an educational employee program addressing VA's organizational culture: veterans' benefits, customer service and performance measures, with a focus on the uniqueness of the veteran population. More information about this innovation can be found on the Virtual Learning Center website: <http://vaww.va.gov/med/osp/cgi-bin/browse.asp?lesson=1540&single=yes>.
 - b. **Honorable Mention:** Goalsharing Program, VA Healthcare Network Upstate New York (VISN 2), for linking awards and recognition to accomplishment of organizational goals and customer service. More information about this innovation can be found on the Virtual Learning Center website (<http://vaww.va.gov/med/osp/cgi-bin/browse.asp?lesson=732&single=yes>).
5. Criteria to be considered in competing for this year's award include, but are not limited to the following:
 - a. Innovative use of Human Resources flexibilities.

- b. Linking awards and recognition to the accomplishment of organizational goals and customer service improvements.
 - c. Use of technology in Human Resources operations.
 - d. Encouraging a culture of teamwork.
 - e. Creating a stimulating, safe and appealing work environment.
 - f. Efforts to achieve diversity and equal employment opportunity within the workforce.
 - g. Ensuring the availability of necessary HRM tools.
 - h. Workforce and succession planning.
 - i. Improvements in recruitment and/or retention processes and practices, such as recruitment and retention for scarce occupations.
 - j. Being a learning organization.
 - k. Streamlining of Human Resources procedures.
 - l. Innovative approaches to labor-management relations.
6. The Human Resource Management Awards Group (HRMAG) will review all nominations and recommend recipients to the Under Secretary for Health. Nominations are to be no longer than three typed pages. Supporting material, such as brochures, videos, training documents, etc., that complement the narrative portion of the nomination is encouraged.
7. Individual and team nominations from field facilities are welcomed, and facilities may submit more than one nomination. Teams may be comprised of employees from within one office, from across organizational lines within a facility, from within multiple facilities, and so on. Award recipients must be Federal employees.
8. If the recipient is an individual, the individual will receive a plaque. If the recipient is a team, the team will receive a plaque and each member of the group will receive a framed certificate. Notable nominations will be publicized for potential adoption by other facilities on the Virtual Learning Center at website <http://vaww.va.gov/vlc.htm>.
9. Nominations are to identify a program or practice that is actually in place where there are accomplishments that can be documented. The first page of all nominations is to contain the following:
- a. The category for which the nomination is being submitted: Individual or Team.
 - b. Names, business address, telephone number, and fax number of all nominees.

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- c. Nominator's name, title, business address, e-mail address, telephone number, and fax number.
- d. A detailed description of the innovative practice or practices.
- e. A description of the issue or problem being addressed, along with information on how the approach was developed, how efforts resulted in improvements in customer service, savings or cost avoidance, and any other appropriate information.

10. Nominations are to have the endorsement of the medical center Director.

11. An original and three copies of each nomination and any supporting materials are due by June 7, 2002, at VA Central Office, Management Support Office (10A2A), Attention Mary Cieplak, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420.

12. For additional information, contact Mary Cieplak, 202-273-8875, e-mail mary.cieplak@hq.med.va.gov, or Dot Brady, 202-273-8873, dot.brady@hq.med.va.gov.

S/ Timothy N. Buckley for
Robert H. Roswell, M.D.
Under Secretary for Health

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